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Addresses: F. C. Barajas L., Museo de Historia Natural de la Universidad Michoacana, Av. Ventura Puente No. 23, Morelia 58020, Michoacán, México. A. R. Phillips, Reforma 825-A, Col. Chapultepec, San Nicolás de los Garza 66450, Nuevo León, México.

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On the validity of *Anumbius annumbi machrisi* Stager, 1959 (Furnariidae, Aves)

by *Fernando Costa Straube*

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The Firewood-gatherer *Anumbius annumbi* is a widely distributed species in central and southern South America. It occurs from the Brazilian states of Tocantins, Goiás and Minas Gerais south to Rio Grande do Sul, as well as into Uruguay and eastern Argentina (Pinto 1978).

Three specimens of this species were collected near São João da Aliança (now in the state of Tocantins) and are the basis of a form that appeared to be a new subspecies *A. a. machrisi*, originally described by Stager (1959). This form was distinguished from the nominate race by the reduced number of black spots around the periphery of the white throat and distinctive streaking on the mantle and crown. The validity of this subspecies has been questioned (Pinto 1978, Vaurie 1980), but no detailed studies have been made.

I analysed 52 specimens of *A. annumbi* deposited in the ornithological collections of Museu de História Natural "Capão da Imbuia" (Curitiba), Museu Nacional (Rio de Janeiro, including the holotype of *A. a. machrisi* MN-32291), and Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (Belém). The specimens represent the entire range of the species and were collected from Tocantins, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) and Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Vaurie (1980) examined a series of 152 specimens and concluded that the two paratypes of *A. a. machrisi* "differ from birds from the other populations of the species in having the black spots surrounding the throat more reduced in number and size" and that "the other characters mentioned for this new form fall, however, within the range of individual variation of the other populations". I agree with Vaurie, but the pattern of gular spotting is also highly variable.

I examined a series of 21 specimens from Paraná (southern Brazil) and found that birds varied in three ways with respect to throat

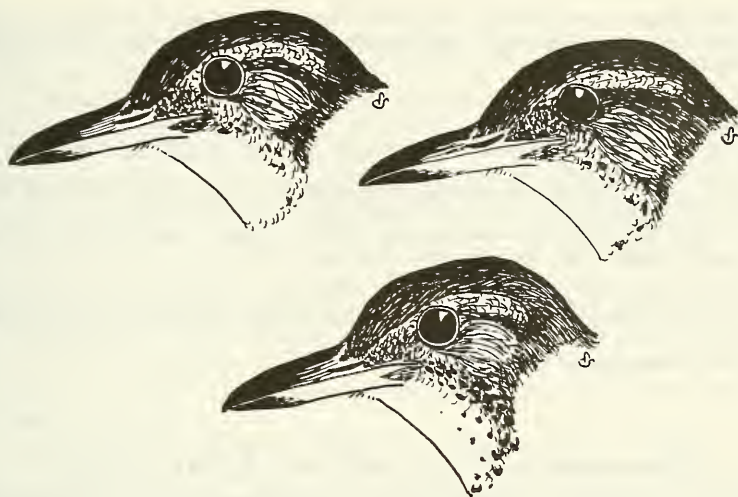


Figure 1. Sketches of three specimens of *Anumbius annumbi*, showing the black spots of the throat of two Paraná skins (upper right and bottom) and the holotype of *A. a. machrisi* (upper left) (drawings by the author).

markings. Some birds had large spots that were densely distributed on the throat; others had scattered spots on the sides of the throat; and still others had only a few small black spots at the base of the mandible (like the holotype of *A. a. machrisi*; see Fig. 1). The same degree of individual variation of black spots on a whitish throat occurs in other furnariids, e.g. *Clibanornis dendrocolaptoides*; this variation does not appear to be correlated with age or geographic range. In fact two specimens of *A. annumbi* collected on the same date and from the same locality have completely ossified skulls, enlarged gonads and very different patterns of throat spotting.

Additionally, I observed that two other characters used to distinguish *A. a. machrisi* were highly variable; the forehead is not always uniformly chestnut, and the mantle streaking is not less conspicuous than in the nominate race.

The only diagnostic difference I could find on the holotype was that the dark brown streakings on the crown were less conspicuous. Even this fieldmark differed among 8 specimens from one collection site in Goiás. In short, the crown streaks vary greatly in shape, number and colour in all parts of the range of this species. Thus, I conclude that *Anumbius annumbi machrisi* Stager, 1959 is a synonym of the monotypic species *Anumbius annumbi* (Vieillot, 1817).

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Address: Fernando Costa Straube, Seção de Ornitologia, Museu de História Natural "Capão da Imbuia". Rua Benedito Conceição, 407. Curitiba (PR), Brazil 82810-080.

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The austral races of the Afrotropical Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis* Cuvier, 1816

by P. A. Clancey

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The two currently recognised subspecies of *Caprimulgus pectoralis* Cuvier, 1816, present in the southern parts of its range are the nominate race, the type-locality of which is George, southern Cape (*ex* Levaillant), and *C. p. fervidus* Sharpe, 1875, described from Damaraland, Namibia, on four C. J. Andersson specimens from the northeast of the territory. Unlike the nominate form, *fervidus* is seen as centred on a major biome, the extensive *Brachystegia* woodland savanna (Miombo) of south-central Africa, south of the Lower Guinea Forest. *C. pectoralis* affects moist woodland and forest edge, lies up in shade on the ground during the day, but seeks relatively open localities at dusk for feeding purposes. A third race, *C. (p.) nigriscapularis* Reichenow, named in 1893 from Songa, west of Lake Albert, eastern Zaire, represents the species in the main to the north of the Equator, reaching western Kenya and adjacent Uganda. Some workers, notably Fry & Harwin (1988), but see also Louette (1990), give it separate species rank, and it is, accordingly, not dealt with in the present contribution.

During nidification, *C. p. fervidus* is sympatric with northern elements of the strongly migratory Rufous-cheeked Nightjar *C. rufigena* A. Smith, 1845, which sojourns (April-September) in the savanna belt of the northern Afrotropics, whereas *C. p. pectoralis* and *C. p. fervidus* are only given to short-range movements and are environmentally more mesic than *rufigena*, which, certainly on its breeding grounds, favours desertic or semi-desertic conditions. Also